THE GREATEST THINGS IN THE WORLD—LOVE, WAR, AND ADVENTURE

THE CHERRY PARASOL.

By OWEN HACKETT.

THAT scar? You see only the end of it. Fortunately by wearing a high collar I can just conceal it; but it extends from the neck (close by the jugular vein, too, my boy) down over the shoulder quite to the breastbone.

A tiger did that—a royal Bengal—and a beauty he was, I tell you. You can see the skin any day in my married sister's sitting room.

But it's a story quite worth telling, and it has a funny side, too, that was thought quite worth repetition at the time in the English papers, though they did not get at the inside facts of the adventure.

It was the period of the hot season stagnation when we were in the consular service at Madras, you know.

The English society (including the few Americans there) were doing little else than sleep and yawn to pass the time.

But everybody, the men especially, were galvanized into excitement when the news came that a tiger had carried off first a woman and then a child during the previous week from a station about fifteen miles in the interior at the foot of the mountains.

Time was when this would have been a sort of every-day announcement in India; but of late years these monsters had been killed off except far in the interior wilderness, and it had already become a rare event for one of these royal fellows to issue from his jungle kingdom.

At any rate, things had got to such a pass of mental torpidity that we needed only the slightest straw to grasp at for the sake of excitement.

In half an hour a hunt had been agreed upon, and servants were flying everywhere about the town to arrange the details and secure the accessories, such as teams and wagons, native porters and beaters, and in the cool of the evening fifteen or twenty gentlemen sportsmen were engaged in oiling gun locks, swabbing out rifle barrels and preparing generally for the morrow's expedition.

It was just dawn on the following morning when we started—a curious cavalcade of fifty or more, in which the white faces were largely in the minority. Some were on horseback, some in carts drawn by bullocks, which, in that country, were very different from what are known as such at home.

About a mile from Madras there was a little bungalow, commanding a view of the sea, which had become a sort of house of public entertainment, popular with the better class of residents as a resort for tiffins and such little excursions as we would call picnics.

We had hardly entered the grove when a silvery feminine laugh greeted our ears, coming from the direction of the native house.

The major, beside whom I was riding, perceptibly started at the sound and glanced at me. I in turn looked enquiringly at him.

"Don't you recognize the voice?" he asked.

"No, I can't say I do?" I answered. "Whose is it? Surely none of mine host Singh's family have such a sweet thrill."

"I should say not, decidedly!" assented the major. "But I must be wrong if you don't recognize it—I thought it for all the world like Miss Bradford's voice."

I could not help looking quickly and keenly at the major. Miss Bradford was my sister and the major had certainly been very attentive to her during the few months of their acquaintance.

If he could recognize her voice in an Indian jungle when her brother failed to do so there must be something serious on the carpet.

I therefore had a peculiar interest in the developments of the next few moments.

"It is positively cruel of you!" said another and a petulant voice. "You make no allowance for my extremely sensitive organization. But I simply cannot go back over that road; the mere thought of it is killing! Hark! Don't you hear something creeping out from the grove?" and there arose a shrill scream which became hysterical as it seemed to diminish, as if the feminine speaker had flown into the cottage.

She had doubtless heard us breaking through the thicket, and in an instant the head of our cavalcade came in full view of the place, and there, sitting calmly on a seat before the door under the overhanging boughs, and looking expectantly but undismayed toward us was—my sister.

"You here!" I exclaimed, really surprised. "And Miss Blithedale, too; I need not ask that." I said, glancing at an open parasol of flaming cherry that lay a few feet away on the ground where the fair and nervous owner had dropped it in her flight.

That parasol! In defiance of all the scientists from Ben Franklin down, Miss Blithedale must needs import from the West a sunshade of the color which above all others reflected least the rays of that very orb.

This she imperturbably carried, a shining mark for derisive jokes, or, perhaps, as an incentive to well-born subaltern bachelors in the arena of love, she the matador and they the quarry.

"How penetrating you are!" was my sister's ironical reply. "Major, you are just in time. Miss Blithedale has just declared that she will not return to town without the escort of the whole garrison — or of Major Gallanton, perhaps."

The Major looked almost pained at this allusion to the dead set that Miss Blithedale had been making at him to every one's amusement.

"And so," my sister continued briskly, "you have all your hunt for nothing! The royal quarry seems to know something about flank movements and strategy as well as your own gallant selves."

"Really, I don't understand, Miss Bradford," said the puzzled soldier. "What is all this about escorts and flank movements! Ah, Miss Blithedale," as that lady appeared, apparently nerved again to a welcome encounter with the major; "this is a most charming coincidence. But explain, please, Miss Bradford."

Then my sister narrated as follows:

The two ladies in question, bored to death at the absence of the only object of interest—the men—had decided on a little expedition of their own.

They had hired one of the native "jaunting cars," as we called them, with its zebu team and native driver, and stowing a luncheon hamper in the "boot," had driven out before the noonday heat for the "park."

Already in sight of the grove, they had been horrified to see the sudden appearance of a great tiger, who stepped out from the undergrowth beside the road, disclosing his superb proportions and brilliant coloring as he first gazed curiously toward them and then lowered his head and began to stalk after them in long strides.

Miss Blithedale uttered a terrific shriek; the driver, turning, saw the beast, and, wild with fear, first whipped up his bullocks and then incontinently fled into the jungle.

Meanwhile, in the same moments, my sister had been equally appalled. But Belle is a girl of pretty strong nerves, as you may know, and though white with fear, she uttered no cry, but silently if wildly looked around for a weapon.

There was none, of course—but stay; the cherry parasol! She snatched it from the nerveless hands of her companion, opened it with a vicious snap, and thrust it sheer into the face of the beast, who was not four feet away.

At the same time she closed her eyes from sudden faintness, but recovering instantly she looked again and—he was gone! She could just see the tail disappearing rapidly as he crawled among the leaves in dire fright.

Without an instant's hesitation my sister sprang to the "box," whipped up the slow bulls, drove the few rods to the bungalow with Miss Blithedale clinging to her and alternately moaning and screeching, as we learned in private.

That was five hours before; Miss Blithedale had absolutely refused to return with the cowardly native driver, who had arrived before them, and my sister had laughingly vowed that in that case she would go back alone, asking no better protection than the cherry parasol.

"You have revolutionized the tiger hunt for the future, Miss Bradford," said the Major, with his eyes full of admiration at the tale which my sister told so lightly and laughingly as to rob it of any trace of egotism. "Hereafter we may expect to see long lines of beaters file through the jungle armed with red umbrellas, and flaming cotton stockades about the villages.

There was some discussion as to the identity of this particular beast, but it was generally allowed to be the same we had been hunting, if for no other reason than to turn the joke against ourselves, the empty-handed Nimrods.

We started back to town and jokingly made a great show of surrounding the car as a protection on every side.

But it turned out to be no joke. When half way back (the Major and myself riding beside the car) there arose frightened cries ahead, and the leaders of the cavalcade came tumbling back upon us in the wildest fear.

The major and I dashed to the front. There in the middle of the road stood his kingship, glaring at the procession with blazing eyes.

We flung ourselves from our horses, unslung our rifles and—— He had been creeping slowly toward us; now he sprang at me just as the Major's rifle cracked.

The bullet could not stop his advance. I felt a terrific shock as the tiger fell at my feet with outstretched claws. One paw dug into my neck as he descended, and tore down over my breast deep through the clothing and into the flesh, pulling me down with terrific force upon his own body.

I sprang to my feet and saw that he lay dead.

The major's shot, true to the mark between the eyes, had caught him in mid-air.

As he lay there, the type of ferocious beauty and brute power, we all marveled that such a magnificent beast should have been frightened off by a mere parasol, even though it flamed like the fires of Aetna.

We were met at the edge of the town by a piece of news that went far to explain this improbability. He had satisfied his hunger on a low caste Brahmin only an hour previous to the roadside encounter with the ladies.

The major claimed the skin, and no one thought of denying it to him. But he only wanted it to present to Belle, and as they were married the following year, he got it back again.

My sister, however, backed by all her friends, made a demand on Miss Blithedale for the cherry parasol, and she has it yet as her peculiar trophy.

Indeed, Miss B. was quite resigned to parting with it, as she at the same time procured a substitute in a gay scarlet jacket that covered the noble form of Lieutenant the Honorable Algernon Binks, H. M. Ninety-seventh Fusiliers.

THE SPEAKING LIGHT.

The "speaking light" is the latest novelty which has made its appearance in Paris; it is the invention of a German professor, improved and perfected by M. Charles Heller, an electrical engineer, residing in France.

The apparatus consists of an ordinary arc lamp, minus the globe. This lamp is placed on a table, and is connected on the one hand with an electric generator and on the other with a microphone, which can be placed at any distance, even miles, away. On the current being passed and the lamp alight anybody singing or speaking in front or over the microphone board is immediately heard by everybody in the room where the lamp is placed.

The arc lamp reproduces every sound with startling clearness. It is necessary, however, for people looking at the lamp to wear smoked glasses, owing to its intensity.

The invention is decidedly ingenious, but at present it is difficult to see what useful purpose it can serve, except as a substitute for the theatrophone, over which it possesses the advantage of allowing a hundred or more persons to listen to a concert miles away, instead of only two, as is the case with the theatrophone.

The inventor, however, is of opinion that at a later period, when more thoroughly developed, the speaking light may have great scientific possibilities before it.—London Express.

THE PLAINT OF A POET.

AH, no one wants the blithe rondel,
Ah, no one seeks the gay rondeau;
Who hungers for the villanelle,
Or feels within his heart a glow
Of joy at ode or epic? No,
Poor Pegasus is clipt of wings;
The age is prose, we're given so
To soap and ice and tea and things.

No longer on Parnassus dwell,
However sorrowful you grow;
And if the strenuous muse impel
Your soul to music here below,
Try not to magnify your woe;
Despite your plaints and murmurings,
You'll have to tread the paths that go
To soap and ice and tea and things.

In merry measures you may tell
Of Chloe's hands, or try to throw
Sweet poesy's enchanting spell
Round Julia's fan, or else bestow
Your tropes on Laura's eyes—I know
You'll surely meet the scorn that clings
To those whose fancies do not flow
To soap and ice and tea and things.

L'ENVOI.

Prince, what if I resentment show?
I am resigned to fortune's flings;
Ah, Muse quiescent, bowing low
To soap and ice and tea and things.

—Munsey's Magazine.

MISS APPLETON'S DECISION

By LILY BRUNO BIRD.

IT IS perhaps a little unusual to consider a proposal of marriage in the waiting room of a large railway station, but that was what Miss Margaret Appleton was doing.

She had twenty minutes to wait for her train, so she found a quiet corner and settled herself comfortably. This was really the first unoccupied time she had found all day, and it was but natural that she should think of Carey Blaisdell's letter, which had come that morning.

She was almost sure when she read it that her answer would have to be "No." Still, she did not wish to be hasty. She was kind-hearted, and she did not enjoy the prospect of hurting the young man's feelings. Nevertheless, if it were necessary, she would do it.

What made it harder was that she really like Carey. He was always so cheerful and sweet tempered, and ever ready to put himself to great inconvenience to do her a favor. Yes, he was very good to her, but she had her doubts of his being equally kind to others. She was afraid, too, that he was rather shallow, and cared for little but to be faultlessly dressed. Moreover, she had a lurking suspicion that he was a bit snobbish, and she hated snobs.

Yes, she would have to refuse him. It was a pity, but it must be done. She tried to think how she would word her reply, making it as kind as possible under the circumstances.

Suddenly she gave a violent start, for a voice, clear and shrill, filling the large room as does a train dispatcher's, spoke the name uppermost in her thoughts:

"Carey Blaisdell!"

Miss Appleton looked out from her corner and took in the situation at a glance.

Just entering one of the outside doors was Carey himself, a smile of welcome on his handsome face.

Rushing to meet him was the owner of the voice, a tall, spare woman past middle age. She was dressed in an extreme fashion, and her gaudy hat had been knocked rakishly askew.

When she reached Carey she dropped her numerous bundles on the floor, threw her arms around his neck and gave him a resounding kiss.

"Well, I be glad to see you," she cried. "I knew you'd be here to meet your old maid aunt. I nerer was so glad to see anybody in my life. I guess I look like a fright—there was an awful crowd on the cars. My, but I be glad to git here!"

Miss Appleton looked and listened in horrified fascination. Then she thought of Carey and her face flushed with sympathy. What would he do? How he must feel! She turned her eyes toward him, and caught her breath in surprise.

He was still smiling and his color had not changed. He seemed utterly oblivious of spectators as he very deliberately stowed away his aunt's smaller bundles in his coat pockets.

Then he helped her with the wrap she was putting on, and they started to leave the station.

They passed so near Miss Appleton that she could hear Carey's voice.

"I am very glad you have come," he was saying, and he looked at his companion with sincere affection in his eyes. "I only hope I can give you half as good a time as you give me when I am at the farm."

"Oh, don't you fret!" said the aunt, so loudly that it made Miss Appleton jump. "I always have a good time when I go anywheres."

The outer door closed behind them, and Miss Appleton looked around the crowded waiting room.

She did not see a face that did not wear a smile, and several groups were laughing noisily. The face of the seller of tickets showed at his window. It was wrinkled with mirth, and his teeth gleamed beneath his black mustache.

Miss Appleton alone did not smile. "Why do they laugh?" she thought with vexation.

It was very absurd, but somehow there was a little lump in her throat.

That night she wrote a few words to Carey Blaisdell, but they were not the words she had planned in the afternoon: "I shall be at home tomorrow evening, and shall be glad to see you."

A COUPLE OF CALLS

By ROLAND BEVERLY HALE.

"HOW do you do, Katy? Is Miss Mary at home?"

Katy thought she was, but was not sure. She would go and see. While she was gone David Carpenter sat down and thought over for the twentieth time the good fortune which had come to him that day. He felt like a boy who had won a pocketful of marbles.

"Well, Mary, I've got my wooden bowl at last!" he cried, as Miss Owen came into the room.

"What do you mean?" Mary paused half way between him and the door.

"I mean that I'm Corporation Counsel of the B. B. & F., with a salary of $7,000 a year.

"I'm sorry to hear it," said Mary.

David's smile died away. He felt that he had asked for a fish and had been given a stone.

He tried to smile again, and looked vexed instead.

"That's a kind thing to say," he observed.

"What I mean is this," said Mary, her large grey eyes looking steadily at her old friend. "There's no fear that you won't succeed in time. You're the most talented man I ever saw, except Edward Calthrop, whom you affect to despise so much. But I don't think you've had trials enough yet. Why you'll never know what it is to struggle with poverty any more; that's a pity, a great pity. You see I'm perfectly frank."

"I certainly don't think you've been over anxious to spare my feelings."

Mary smiled. She had large features and very expressive ones. When she smiled it was as much as two ordinary smiles.

"Nonsense," she said. "What good does it do to spare each other's feelings? We were put into this world to help each other along, not to tell each other we'd gone far enough already."

"You don't approve of a kindly slap on the back once in a while?"

"Yes, when a man's down. But you're up."

"I'm not up now."

There was a pause. The pleasant light was gone from David's rather dangerous looking eyes.

He had a face that looked as if it had been chiseled out of granite. As he leaned forward and spoke to Mary, a child might have seen that the B. B. & F. would get their money's worth in a man like that.

"To tell you the truth, Mary," he said, after looking at her in silence till she wondered if she could look at him any more, his eyes were so stern. "I think you've been talking to a fool. I came in here happy as a boy, and, as you say, on the top of the wave, and wanting my old friend to wish me joy of my new place, and in five minutes you've got me back to my hard old matter-of-fact self by saying something which you think rather fine, and which anyone can see is extremely unkind.

"I'm seldom in good spirits, and when I am I shall know where not to go. I'll tell you one of my rules of business; it's this: Don't say anything unless good is going to come of it. What good could come of your remark is something which I'm glad I haven't got to find out. You're one of my best friends, Mary, and I think you're really attached to me; but when I want sympathy I should as soon think of going out in front of the house and confiding in our old stone post."

The tears came into Mary's eyes. She was silent.

It was at this moment, perhaps an opportune one, that Mrs. Owen came into the room.

"What, Mary, not ready for the theater yet?" she said. "It's almost eight o'clock. Why, Mr. Carpenter, I am so glad to see you! I'm sorry we haven't an extra ticket. It looks so inhospitable," and she rattled on.

Mr. Owen came in, too, and Mary went up stairs to put on her things. When she came back Mrs. Owen was still talking, David pretending to listen, and Mr. Owen reading the evening paper. Then the three theatregoers went out with more apologies, and when their footsteps died away David went out after them.

He tripped on something at the threshold and fell down the front steps, tearing his clothes. When he got up he laughed dismally at this unnecessary excess of misfortune.

"What a successful evening," he said under his breath as he walked away.

He was light hearted when he entered the house; irritated and cross when he came out. It makes very little difference at the end of a mile run how you felt before you began.

As soon as David had heard the theater mentioned at the Owens' he had thought:

"Then I'll go to see Violet Anderson."

Pleasant thoughts came back; the struggling past, the successful present, the glorious future. Violet would not receive him as Mary had done. He rather thought he liked Violet better than any girl he knew. Mary's ideas were too much like a man's. She had a splendid mind, but after all it is nice to have women feminine.

And they ought to be fond of music! Mary could not tell one tune from another, whereas Violet—perhaps she would sing to-night. When a man was married it would be nice to have some one to sing to him when he came home from battling with the world—and beating it, David added, throwing out his chest.

He did not want to come home and argue and get cross and be told that success was a bad thing. He smiled at this last idea and also at a pleasant contrast which suggested itself next.

Violet was sitting on the steps of the front porch, near her father and mother, when David made his appearance. He smiled as he saw the perfect taste and elegance of her simple summer dress, and contrasted it with some unfortunate inharmonious colors which he had seen not long ago.

After shaking hands all round, he sat down next to Violet. Mr. and Mrs. Anderson set out to make a call, leaving the young people alone.

The gentle south wind carried to them the fragrance of the lilacs in a neighboring garden. In the next street children were still playing, though it was high time they were in bed, and their voices were wafted to David and Violet, softened by the distance.

It was one of those evenings when, somehow, one finds difficulty in loving one's neighbor. David found none.

"How did you like staying at the Calamores'?" asked David. "Are young married people agreeable at home?"

"I didn't have an especially good time," Violet replied; "but they did. Do you know, I rather envied them, and wished I was married or engaged or something."

If "something" stood for "in love," David began to feel as if he were "something."

It was pleasant to sit in silence, but it was pleasanter to hear Violet's voice on the night air. So he spoke to her again, merely that she might answer him.

"The only trouble with being married or engaged is that you must be married or engaged to someone."

"And you think I shall find difficulty in bringing any one to the point?" she enquired, smiling.

He could not help being embarrassed. "No, I don't mean that. Only I thought you might feel like being in love and yet not know anyone you cared for in that way."

She half rose from the piazza step and adjusted her dress so as to sit more comfortably. "I think I shall be able to find one," she said.

Her reply set him thinking. But you cannot think reasonably about a beautiful girl of twenty when she is sitting next you on a piazza step. David was conscious of a certain absurdity in the attempt.

"Won't you sing to me, Violet?" he asked.

The piano was close by the long glass door opening on the piazza.

"If you're obedient," she said, rising. "Sit perfectly still, and don't move a muscle except to say it was pretty when I've finished."

He had asked her to sing so as to give himself a chance to think while she was singing. If he wanted to think favorably of her this was an excellent plan.

Violet had an exquisite taste in all things, and she sang a few soft ballads and one quiet song of Schubert's that harmonized as well as the lilacs and her own violets with the stillness and beauty of the evening.

When she came back David was hardly himself. With characteristic frankness she sat down close by him, just where she had been before.

"Shall we go in?" she asked.

"Oh, no," said David. "I could sit here forever."

She looked up quickly. He seldom made speeches like that.

"I am perfectly satisfied," she said.

David began to think over something he had heard about a great general, who had suddenly changed his plan in the heat of action, and by so doing had achieved a splendid victory.

"I agree with you in what you said, Violet," he observed.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I think it would be nice to be married, or engaged, or something, too."

"Then why don't you?"

"I don't know whether I can marry the person I want." And then after a pause: "Can I?"

"I'm afraid I don't quite know what you mean."

"I mean you."

Her whole manner changed. She rose abruptly, and stood off a little way. He rose, too.

"I thought we were good friends, David, and nothing more. I'm afraid I can't do what you ask."

"Don't be hasty in your refusal, I beg of you," said David, nervously. "I'm not one of those fools who'll be dancing round you after you've said you don't want me. This is once for all, Violet."

"Once for all."

David shook hands with her.

"God bless you, Violet," he said. Then he put on his hat, picked up his stick, and walked out on the street.

He felt like a drunken man who has suddenly had his head put under a pump. He was decidedly uncomfortable, and yet had an indefinable feeling that good was coming of it all.

His character, stern as it was, was not one of those which are hardened by bad luck. His nature sloped toward the right. A shock always affected him for good, as an earthquake always sets the boulders on a mountainside rolling the same way.

A cool easterly breeze had sprung up. David had not walked a hundred yards before a new idea struck him.

"By Jove, I hadn't told her of my appointment and new salary.

He stopped, then walked on.

"I guess on the whole I won't turn round," he said to himself.

A HERO OF TOURNAY.

By TOM HALL.

IT was the dreary end of a winter afternoon. I had been reading for hours in a snug corner of the Astor Library and had fallen into a half somnolent revery which, in a short time, would have induced actual slumber, when my attention was attracted to the figure of a man dressed in a manner so grotesque (at least to my eyes), and who bore such an evident air of antiquity that all the vagrant fancies of my day dream were banished in an instant.

Much to my embarrassment, the strange gentleman approached me, evidently with the intention of rebuking me or drawing me into conversation, which would have been in either case a disagreeable development of the situation.

The only weapon he carried was a primitive sort of bayonet. I have since found, after much research, that the costume he wore was the uniform of the Foot Guards of Queen Anne. And is the only verification I can make, even to myself, of the narrative that is to follow.

"Good sir," said the stranger to me, in a dialect which, though evidently English, was as strange to me as his costume, and which I would not attempt to imitate or describe, "Can you read?"

His question can be considered, I think, as startlingly silly. To ask me, a graduate of a college, a confirmed student, even a writer of books, if I could read—how absurd!

"Do you not see," said I, somewhat testily, "that I am reading?"

"I thought it was possible," replied my unwelcome questioner; "but I have never seen one read, and I was not sure."

"I can read," I said simply.

"Have you read much?" he continued.

"That is a matter depending entirely on comparison with the reading of others," I answered. "For an average man I have read a great deal."

"Then," said he, and his face brightened with intense interest, "you have read of the great Duke of Marlborough?"

"Most assuredly," I replied; "I have read a great deal about him. I can describe to you minutely the battles of Blenheim——"

"I was there," he broke in.

"Ramillies, Oudenarde——"

"I was at both, and all the sieges between."

"Malplaquet——"

"Nay, I was not there. That must have been after I became famous as England's bravest soldier."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, becoming greatly interested. "You are then England's bravest soldier? That is a title that has been aspired to by many, and they say fairly won by many, too. May I ask, sir, who you are?"

"I, my good sir," he answered, solemnly and impressively, "am the famous Henry Hawkins."

"You have read of the siege of Tournay?" he continued.

"It occurred late in the summer of 1709," I answered. "Both town and citadel were eventually captured by the Duke of Marlborough, after the fiercest of fighting, while Prince Eugene held off the relieving army of Marshal Vallars."

"Right," he interjected. "Your history is right in all that, but does it make no mention of Henry Hawkins?"

"None whatever. Did this Henry Hawkins—yourself, I presume—have a title?"

"He was to have had at least a posthumous title," answered my strange friend. "Whether he has or not I have been unable to determine. I have oftimes looked at the book of peerage, but, being unable to read it, it was of no use. Neither can any of my contemporaries, who were learned, read the book on account of what they call the ridiculous spelling of the present day. Nor can I find my bust in Westminster Abbey. But I have supposed that was because of the bad likeness. You have no idea how terribly famous men are misrepresented by artists and sculptors."

"Oh, yes, I have," said I; "I had my photograph taken once."

"But it seemed to me that history must have recorded the noble achievements of Henry Hawkins in the mines of Tournay."

"I am afraid," I answered "that it does not. But what was this achievement?"

"I am a brave man, sir, or perhaps I should say I was a brave man, and it would ill befit me to speak of my deeds of daring; but from what you say, sir, I know that I must have been forgotten, and perhaps the world will as soon forget my lack of modesty in telling you. The fact is, sir, if I had known earlier how soon the world forgets I would have had a good deal more fun with the lassies of Alnwick, and lived a good deal longer, too, I make bold to think."

"Dying, to my mind, was a cheap price for such distinctions, but to win such a thing the act had to be comitted under the very eyes of the great duke himself. Otherwise, some superior officer would claim the credit. Well, the chance came at Tournay. You know what a terrible siege it was, sir. I have no doubt that the awful carnage there put a stop to war forever."

"No," said I; "there have been many wars since."

"You do not mean it!!" he continued. "Why, they blew us up from below, and blew us down from above, and blew us off into eternity from all sides. Those accursed French engineers sank pockets of gunpowder in the ground everywhere and a brave man had no chance at all."

"There have been many deadlier contrivances introduced in war than mining and countermining," I interjected, "and they have none of them prevented human beings from slaying each other."

"There was one fight under ground, when one of our tunnels ran into them while they were digging a mine, that lasted two whole days. We won that fight, and slowly but surely we fought our way, underground as you might say, up almost to the scarp of the citadel.

"But it was hard work getting men to fight that way. They offered us money and promotion time and time again. That was my chance. We had a tunnel that ran up, as near as we could calculate, to within fifty yards of one of their bastions, when our men refused to work any longer. They had got to within a few feet of a French mine, and through the earth they could hear the Frenchmen making it ready.

"No doubt the enemy heard us also and were preparing to blow us up as soon as it suited their convenience. I was standing near the entrance to the tunnel when the Duke of Marlborough rode up to inspect it.

"'A captaincy and undying fame,' said he, 'to the man who will go into that tunnel, dig through to the mine and cut the fuse.'

"'Henry Hawkins will do it,' said I, grabbing a pickax and running into the tunnel.

"I could hear the cheers of the men as I went, but I kept mighty quiet myself, for I did not want to be heard by the enemy. Well, how I managed it, and how I found the strength to dig through to that mine alone I know not, but at the end of a terrible labor I worked down till just a thin screen of earth separated me from it.

"I made a small hole and looked through. I was surprised to find it quite light in the mine—the French were much smarter than we were at such things, and they were throwing sunlight into it by means of mirrors. I could see that I was just in time. They were almost ready to fire it, and only one man was in the entrance. That man was attaching the fuse to the powder.

"'My Frenchman, I'll have you,' I said to myself, and, drawing my bayonet, I threw my weight on the screen of earth I had left between us, and dropped down on him.

"He may have been surprised, but he did not show it. On the contrary, he fought like a soldier. But I was a soldier, too, and, after I had stuck him a few times with my bayonet, he gave up. He called out a lot of things in French I did not understand, though, and immediately the light was shut off, and the Frenchman and I were left in utter darkness.

"That did not matter to me, however. I felt around, found the fuse and cut it. I even destroyed it for several yards to make sure. 'I'm a captain and I'm famous,' said I to myself. And then——"

"And then?" I broke in.

"And then I died—was killed," he answered.

"I was killed so quickly I never knew," he continued. "I have always supposed that it was the Frenchman who did it. I had not killed him, probably, and he got a weapon and killed me. But I did not care. I knew they would find my body and know that I had cut the fuse, and I would be called Captain Hawkins and be famous anyway."

"But he could not have killed you instantly with any weapon he had at hand, and with the little strength he had left, after you had wounded him so many times with your bayonet."

"That's so," he said; "I never thought of that—and I've plenty of time to think about it, too. But who else could have killed me? There was no one else around."

I must say that I felt rather queer at telling a man who had died nearly two centuries before how he had been killed. But I thought I could make a shrewd guess at the solution of the problem.

"You know," said I, "that the French had mines under their mines? In other words, their mines were double, so that if you English should capture a mine they could blow you up while you were in it."

"No, I didn't know that," he answered, slowly. "What fiends they were!"

"Well, they did, and used them many times, but probably after you were killed. So that accounts for you not knowing about them. Now, you say this Frenchman called out. He was probably telling his comrades that the English were in the mine, supposing that there were more than you. They, of course, sprang the under mine, and that would account for what I may call the suddenness of your taking off. That will account, also, for the fact that your name is not inscribed on the roll of fame, for how could the Duke of Marlborough know that you had succeeded in cutting the fuse?"

My strange acquaintance mused over this proposition for a long time and with a gradually saddening countenance.

"I think you are right, my good sir," he said at last. "In fact, I am thoroughly convinced that you are. I will cease my search for fame this very moment."

He turned and began to fade through the side of the building. Just as he was almost enveloped by the white wall, however, he looked around and said:

"I think that after all I did, though, sir, it was very rough luck on me." And he disappeared entirely from my view as I answered:

"I think so, too."

THE PIQUANT CAVIARE.

Away up in the backwoods of Agloma, north of the Rainy River, there is a long, forbidding body of water known as the Lake of the Woods. From this section of the Canadian wilderness comes nearly all the caviare consumed in American markets. It is Russian caviare to the general public, but it is only Canadian caviare, bearing a Continental label. The caviare is exported to Europe, and only the inferior grades find their way back to this country, the best of it being kept for European epicures. The general and greatly increased favor with which caviare is received has caused a great drain upon the sturgeon fisheries of Europe, and those of Canada and the United States have been called upon to meet the demand. The Lake of the Woods has supplied much of the caviare exported from America.

The Lake of Woods has a total area of 6,000 square miles, and its waters abound with fish, the most important of which is the sturgeon. They are caught mainly for the caviare, though there is a profit in smoking the meat. After the fish is killed it is carefully cleaned and the caviare set aside in tanks. It is then taken and washed repeatedly until it is thoroughly cleansed, after which it is rubbed by hand through a series of screens until all the eggs are separated. It is then packed in kegs with salt and kept in cold storage until time of shipment. It is an extremely simple process, requiring but little manipulation. In Europe the kegs are opened and the caviare sorted out according to quality. It is then put up in small lead packages and tin and put on the market as Russian caviare. The best grades find a ready sale at highest prices, but the inferior grades come back to America.—What to Eat.